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The New Shape of EC

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The journal *Eukaryotic Cell* has served the eukaryotic microbiology community since 2002. It will continue to do so as it merges into the new broad-scope open-access journal *mSphere* in 2016.

The world has changed since 2002, and thank goodness that it has! In the study of eukaryotic microbes, there is no comparison between then and now. In 2002, few of our favorite organisms had genome sequences, gene expression and proteomic profiles, or a molecularly based phylogeny. Natural variation was characterized mainly at the phenotypic level. There were few regulatory networks; finding just one regulator for a biological process was an exceptional achievement! Many eukaryotic pathogens were viewed as exotic problems. The significance of most research on eukaryotic microbes was not broadly appreciated.

The journal *Eukaryotic Cell* (EC) was born into that world of 2002. Our founding editor in chief, C. C. Wang, envisioned a venue for publication of basic science investigations into eukaryotic microbes, one guided by the quality of the science and its value to the community. Those objectives have most certainly been achieved. One measure is provided by citation rates for articles published in EC. Specifically, if we look at articles that focus on the eukaryotic microbes that were the subjects of most EC articles, the citation rate is higher for articles in EC than it is for many peer journals that have higher Journal Impact Factors (Fig. 1). We were able to capture the best aspects of the peer review process, in which members of our own scientific community assessed the value of EC manuscripts. Our editors and reviewers were clearly capable of recognizing and supporting quality work.

Our editors supported our community in broader ways than just publishing quality science. We recognized young scientists through EC Outstanding Young Investigator Award presentations at conferences, long before many other journals followed our lead. We also accelerated the review process, achieving one of the fastest mean times to first decision of any peer-reviewed journal, 21 days. The latter accomplishment derived from the remarkable dedication of our editors, editorial board members, and *ad hoc* reviewers. In that context, I would like to thank the colleagues who reviewed most frequently for EC during my time as editor in chief (Table 1). I believe that their dedication reflected the recognition that EC stayed true to its goal to support our community.

Eukaryotic microbiology has flourished since 2002. The field is more multidisciplinary than ever, more broadly focused than ever, more relevant than ever across the entire spectrum of the life sciences. This point is reflected in our community's

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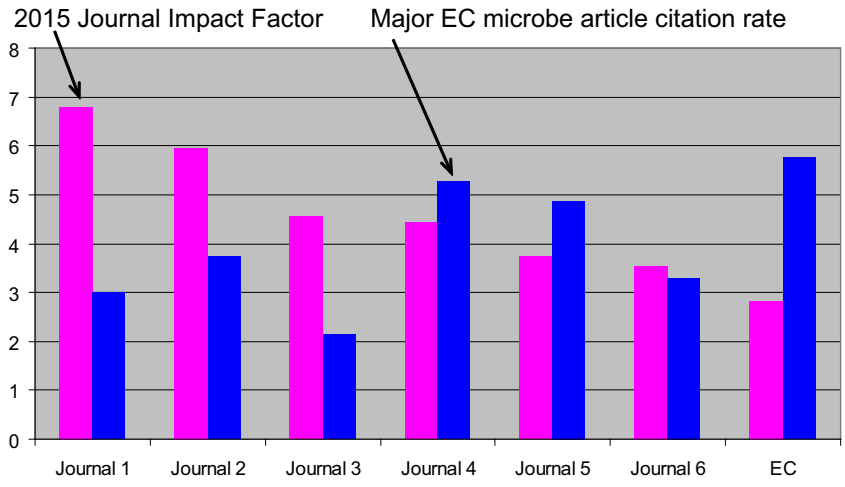

FIG 1 Comparison of 2015 Journal Impact Factors and citation rates for articles about major EC microbes. Journal Impact Factors (pink bars) were collected from the 2015 Journal Citation Report (JCR) listing for EC and six other journals that publish articles in the area of microbiology. EC has the lowest Journal Impact Factor of the group. Citation rates for articles in each journal about the major EC eukaryotic microbes (blue bars) that were published in 2013 to 2014 were identified by searches in the Web of Science for each journal using the title words "neurospora *or* candida *or* aspergillus *or* cryptococcus *or* chlamydomonas *or* plasmodium *or* toxoplasma *or* trypanosoma." Web of Science citation reports were used to calculate citation rates over all databases.

TABLE 1 The EC Reviewer Hall of Fame: the most frequent EC reviewers from 2009 to 2015[a]

Name
James Bangs
Axel A. Brakhage
Robert A. Cramer
Dana A. Davis
Mark Field
Steven Harris
Charles Hoffman
Alexander Idnurm
James B. Konopka
James Kronstad
Xiaorong Lin
William F. Loomis
John M. Lopes
Gregory May
Kevin A. Morano
W. Scott Moye-Rowley
Laurie K. Read
Todd B. Reynolds
John C. Samuelson
Upinder Singh
Theodore C. White
Jin-Rong Xu
Chaoyang Xue

[a] Most EC editors were also frequent reviewers prior to their appointments as editors, and their names have been omitted from this list for brevity.

preference for broad-scope journals (Fig. 2A). Scientific publishing has flourished as well, with open-access publication being the preference or mandate of leading researchers across the globe. In fact, our community has also embraced open-access publishing (Fig. 2B). If we are to continue our mission to support the community of eukaryotic microbiologists, then EC must adapt to this reality.

The new ASM open-access journal *mSphere* captures the needs of our research community in 2016. Its scope extends across all of the microbial sciences, its papers and features will exemplify and encourage multidisciplinary thought, and it will offer unrestricted global access to its research papers by scientists from diverse disciplines and institutions. In short, *mSphere* will be what EC needs to become. Therefore, following this December 2015 issue, EC will merge into *mSphere*. Specifically, I will serve as an *mSphere* senior editor, and almost all of our current EC editors will serve as *mSphere* editors. We will implement the scientific judgment and community-centered view that have been the strengths of EC in a journal that meets our current needs. I look forward to supporting the efforts and vision of Mike Imperiale, *mSphere* editor in chief, whom I have known for over 20 years. Most importantly, I look forward to serving the eukaryotic microbiology research community in this new and exciting venue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have learned that the best leaders are able to make it fun to do your job, and I thank C. C. Wang, the founding editor in chief of EC, and Tom Shenk, chairman of the ASM Journals Board, for teaching me that lesson repeatedly! Tom Shenk and Barbara Goldman, director of ASM Journals, always supported and shaped my ideas about EC, for which I am exceptionally grateful. My fellow EC editors, past and present, deserve special mention for many inspiring and insightful discussions, including J. Andrew Alspaugh, Yong-Sun Bahn, Geraldine Butler, Reinhard Fischer, N. Louise Glass, Patrick Keeling, Michael Lorenz, Margaret Phillips, L. David Sibley, Meng-Chao Yao, Jay C. Dunlap, Joseph Heitman, Adam Kuspa, Sabeeha Merchant, Ching Kung, and Ursula W. Goodenough. Our production editors, Noel Lin and Ellie Ghatineh, made life easy for editors, authors, and reviewers, for which I express my most sincere thanks. Finally, I am especially appreciative to Howard Shuman, Xiaorong Lin, Saranna Fanning, and Katherine Lagree for comments on the manuscript and to Maxwell W. Mitchell for extracting and organizing data from PubMed for this article.

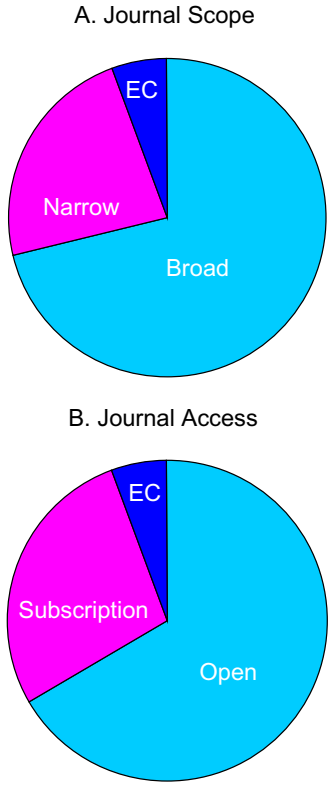

FIG 2 Distribution of articles about eukaryotic microbes in 2013. Articles were identified in PubMed with the search term "neurospora *or* candida *or* aspergillus *or* cryptococcus *or* chlamydomonas *or* plasmodium *or* toxoplasma *or* trypanosoma" and publication date limits of 1 January 2013 to 1 January 2014. The 10 journals that published the largest numbers of these articles were grouped into narrow scope or broad scope (A) and subscription or open access (B). Each chart reflects the number of articles published in each pair of categories and in EC. EC ranked fourth among journals in the number of articles published in this search.